

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

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INFO AMEMBASSY BONN

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AMEMBASSY COPENHAGEN

AMEMBASSY DUBLIN

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY PARIS

AMEMBASSY ROME

AMEMBASSY THE HAGUE

USMISSION EC BRUSSELS UNN

USMISSION NATO BRUSSELS

C O N F I D E N T I A L LUXEMBOURG 0049

E. O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: EC, LU

SUBJECT: LUXEMBOURG REACTION TO THE TINDEMANS REPORT

SUMMARY: A BRIEF CONVERSATION WITH PRIME MINISTER THORN AND
EXTENSIVE TALKS WITH HIS PRINCIPLE ASSISTANT, PAUL HELMINGER,
WHO WAS SPECIFICALLY AUTHORIZED TO GIVE THORN'S VIEWS TO ME,
PROVIDE THE BASIS FOR THE FOLLOWING REPORT ON THORN'S
REACTIONS TO THE TINDEMANS REPORT. THORN'S SEES THE REPORT AS A
REALISTIC APPROACH TO THE COMMUNITY'S PROBLEMS AND POSSIBILITIES
AND AS SUCH A SAD COMMENTARY ON THE CURRENT STATE OF EUROPEAN
UNITY. REATHER THAN A BLUEPRINT FOR INNOVATION OR PROGRESS,
HE REGARDS THE PROPOSALS AS FIRST OF ALL DESIGNED TO SECURE
GAINS ALREADY MADE WHILE KEEPING OPTIONS OPEN FOR LATER
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PROGRESS IN MORE PROPITIOUS CIRCUMSTANCES. NONETHELESS,

HE BELIEVES THE REPORT RAISES ALL THE RIGHT ISSUES, REDUCES THE VAGUENESS OF THE CONCEPT OF EUROPEAN UNION, AND ESTABLISHES A CHECKLIST FOR MEASURING PROGRESS. HE DOES NOT ENDORSE EACH SPECIFIC PROPOSAL BUT REGARDS THE WHOLE AS AN EXCELLENT FOCUS FOR DEBATE. AS CURRENT PRESIDENT OF THE EUROPEAN COUNCIL, THORN WILL TRY TO ASSURE THAT THE REPORT'S RECOMMENDATIONS RECEIVE RAPID, HIGH LEVEL CONSIDERATION BY THE NINE. TO THIS END, AT THE JANUARY 20 COUNCIL OF MINISTERS MEETING IN BRUSSELS, HE WILL ASK EACH GOVERNMENT TO PREPARE AN ANALYSIS OF THE REPORT SO THAT IT CAN BE DISCUSSED AT THE NEXT EUROPEAN COUNCIL WHICH HE HOPES CAN BE HELD MARCH 8 AND 9. END SUMMARY.

1. QUALITATIVE CHANGE: ON TINDEMANS'S PROPOSAL FOR QUALITATIVE CHANGE IN THE EC'S APPROACH TO COMMON FOREIGN POLICY, THORN BELIEVES HE IS ESSENTIALLY CALLING FOR A POLITICAL COMMITMENT TO FORGE COMMON POSITIONS ON ALL FOREIGN POLICY ISSUES RATHER THAN JUST ON THE EASY ONES. IN THORN'S VIEW THIS WOULD NOT SO MUCH LEAD TO AUTOMATIC ACCEPTANCE OF THE WILL OF THE MAJORITY BUT TO A PROCESS OF CONSULTATION AND COMPROMISE WHICH WOULD ASSURE CONSENSUS. THORN RECOGNIZES THAT THIS PROCESS COULD RESULT IN "LOWEST COMMON DENOMINATOR" POLICIES, AT LEAST AT FIRST, BUT FEELS THAT THE RISK IS JUSTIFIED IF THE PRINCIPLE OF A COMMON FOREIGN POLICY CAN BE FIRMLY ESTABLISHED. HE BELIEVES AN EXTENDED PERIOD OF TRANSLATING THIS PROCESS INTO ACTION WOULD NECESSARILY PROCEED ADOPTION OF A TREATY REQUIREMENT TO HARMONIZE FOREIGN POLICY.

2. TWO-TIER APPROACH TO ECONOMIC AND MONETARY UNITY: THORN TAKES A PRAGMATIC IF RESIGNED VIEW OF THE TWO-TIER APPROACH AS A NECESSARY EVIL. LOOKED AT OPTIMISTICALLY, IT COULD SIMPLY PRODUCE A DIFFERENT TIME TABLE FOR THE VARIOUS STATES IN REACHING THE SAME GOAL. LOOKED AT PESSIMISTICALLY, THORN FEARS IT COULD LEAD TO QUALITATIVE DIFFERENCES IN EC MEMBERSHIP, PARTICULARLY IF THE COMMUNITY IS EXPANDED TO INCLUDE GREECE AND SPAIN. THORN IS NOT SO MUCH CONCERNED BECAUSE HE FEARS BENELUX WOULD BE LEFT OUT OF THE INNER CIRCLE; HE SEES THE BENELUX COUNTRIES ALONG WITH FRANCE AND GERMANY AS THE INNER CORE. THE TWO-TIER APPROACH IS DISTASTEFUL TO THORN RATHER BECAUSE OF THE VIOLENCE IT DOES TO FUDAMENTAL COMMUNITY PRINCIPLES. NONETHELESS, THORN REGARDS TINDEMANS' PROPOSALS

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AS THE ONLY REALISTIC WAY TO PROCEED IN THE ECONOMIC AND MONETARY AREAS GIVEN THE CURRENT DISPARITY AMONG THE NINE. IF THE DEVELOPMENT OF "FIRST AND SECOND CLASS" COMMUNITY STATES IS INEVITABLE, THORN BELIEVES IT IS BETTER TO FORMALIZE THE PROCESS, ATTEMPT TO DEFINE AND REGULATE IT RATHER THAN LET IT HAPPEN "UNCONSCIOUSLY" BY PRECEDENT AND USAGE.

3. SECURITY AND US/EC RELATIONS: THORN DOES NOT REPROACH

TINDEMANS FOR FAILING TO TAKE A MORE "HEROIC" STAND IN THESE AREAS. HE ACCEPTS THE JUDGMENT IMPLICIT IN THE REPORT THAT THE MEASURES PROPOSED ARE THE MAXIMUM THAT COULD BE ACHIEVED FOR THE PRESENT. HE HAS NO OBJECTION TO THE SPECIFIC PROPOSAL OF NAMING A SPECIAL REPRESENTATIVE OF THE COUNCIL TO CONSULT WITH THE UNITED STATES ON A REDEFINITION OF US/EC RELATIONS BUT BELIEVES THAT THE EXERCISE WILL NOT LEAD TO PROCEDURES FOR CONSULTATION AND COORDINATION THAT ARE MUCH SUPERIOR TO THOSE NOW IN EXISTENCE AT LEAST IN THE IMMEDIATE FUTURE. IN HIS VIEW THE EMPHASIS IN US/EC RELATIONS SHOULD BE ON CONTENT RATHER THAN PROCEDURE. HE WOULD LIKE TO SEE THE RANGE OF SUBJECTS FOR POLITICAL CONSULTATIONS EXPANDED AND THE PROCEDURES UNDER WHICH THEY ARE DISCUSSED RELAXED. IN THIS CONTEXT, DISCUSSIONS ON WESTERN SECURITY WOULD LOOM LARGE. THORN RECOGNIZES THE POSSIBILITY OF A CONFLICT BETWEEN THE COMMUNITY'S FOCUSING ON DEFENSE AND SECURITY QUESTIONS AND RELATIONSHIPS WITHIN THE ATLANTIC ALLIANCE. FOR THIS REASON, HE FEELS THAT DEFENSE, SECURITY AND NATO RELATIONS SHOULD BE PRIME SUBJECTS FOR ENLARGED US/EC POLITICAL DISCUSSIONS. HE APPROVES OF THE PRIORITY SYMBOLIC IN THE FACT THAT TINDEMANS PUTS RELATIONS BETWEEN EUROPE AND THE UNITED STATES AHEAD OF SECURITY IN HIS LISTING OF AREAS OF FOREMOST CONCERN TO THE COMMUNITY.

4. INSTITUTIONS: THORN REGARDS THE PROPOSAL ON INSTITUTIONS AS THE WEAKEST PART OF THE REPORT. WHILE IN THEORY HE SUPPORTS BOLSTERING THE COMMISSION, HE FEELS THAT IT IS IMPRACTICAL BECAUSE THE IDEA OF THE COMMISSION AS A EUROPEAN GOVERNMENT IN EMBRYO IS DEAD. THEREFORE, HE REGRETS THAT TINDEMANS THROWS A SOP TO THIS CONCEPT BY PROPOSING THAT THE PRESIDENT OF THE COMMISSION BE APPOINTED BY THE EUROPEAN COUNCIL AND BE CONFIRMED BY THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT. HE HAS NO OBJECTION TO STRENGTHENING THE COMMISSION PRESIDENCY OR GIVING IT A LARGER VOICE IN

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APPOINTING COMMISSIONERS, BUT HE FEELS THAT TINDEMANS WOULD HAVE DONE BETTER TO TAKE A HARD, CRITICAL LOOK AT THE REAL LIMITATIONS AND PROSPECTS OF THE COMMISSION AND AT LEAST OPEN THE DEBATE ALONG MORE CREATIVE LINES. HIS OWN VIEW IS THAT THE EUROPEAN COUNCIL AND ITS PRESIDENT ARE THE ONLY INSTITUTIONS THAT CAN WIELD REAL POLITICAL POWER IN THE COMMUNITY. HE BELIEVES, THEREFORE, THAT A CONCRETE, WELL-DEFINED POLITICAL RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THE COUNCIL AND THE PARLIAMENT, PARTICULARLY WHEN THE PARLIAMENT IS ELECTED BY UNIVERSAL SUFFRAGE, IS ESSENTIAL. ALTHOUGH HE HAS NO MAGIC FORMULA FOR ESTABLISHING THESE RELATIONSHIPS, HE ENVISIONS THE ROLE OF THE COMMISSION AS A SORT OF EXECUTIVE SECRETARIAT FOR THE COUNCIL AND PARTICULARLY THE COUNCIL PRESIDENT. HE BELIEVES THE COMMISSION HAS A UNIQUE AND EXTREMELY IMPORTANT ROLE TO PLAY AS THE ONE INSTITUTION WHICH REPRESENTS

THE COMMUNITY AS A WHOLE, WHICH INEVITABLY DEFENDS AN EC POINT OF VIEW RATHER THAN THE SUM OF THE INDIVIDUAL STATES' POSITIONS. ABOVE ALL HE FEELS THAT THE ROLL OF ALL THREE INSTITUTIONS, THE PARLIAMENT, COUNCIL AND COMMISSION, MUST BE DEFINED IN TERMS OF SPECIFIC POWERS AND RESPONSIBILITIES AND HIS VISION IS CLEARLY ONE OF A LOOSE FEDERAL SYSTEM DOMINATED BY THE COUNCIL.

5. COMMENT: PARTICULARLY IN LAYING OUT THORN'S VIEWS ON INSTITUTIONS, HELMINGER CAUTIONED THAT THORN HIMSELF MIGHT NOT STATE HIS VIEWS SO BLUNTLY. IN FACT, HE WOULD NOT WANT IT THOUGHT THAT HE IS OPPOSED TO THE POSITION THE COMMISSION NOW HAS OR TO ENLARGING ITS POWERS WHERE POSSIBLE, BUT HE DOES NOT BELIEVE CONCENTRATING ON THE COMMISSION IS IN ACCORD WITH CURRENT DYNAMICS OF POLITICAL POWER AMONG THE NINE. HE IS CONVINCED THAT THE COUNCIL WILL ASSUME MORE DIRECT RESPONSIBILITY FOR A GREATER NUMBER OF ISSUES, THAT IT WILL MEET MORE FREQUENTLY, PERHAPS AS MANY AS 6-7 TIMES A YEAR, AND THAT ANY BLUEPRINT FOR POLITICAL UNITY MUST BEGIN WITH THE COUNCIL AS THE LOCUS OF POWER. PHILLIPS

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